

rubber ... and a substantially rigid section of thermoplastic ... the elements of the tongue and groove arrangement being *bonded together*, the bonding of the elements of the tongue and groove arrangement *occurring during coextrusion* of the flexible and substantially rigid sections."

In contrast, Francis teaches an integral brace and hinge member 20 comprising brace sections 21, 22 of unplasticized poly-vinyl chloride resins coupled by a flexible hinge section 23 of rubber-like composition. The brace and hinge sections in Francis are formed in two separate and distinct extrusion processes. The brace sections are fabricated first by extruding a continuous length of brace which is cut into two lengths which form the brace sections. Then, the hinge section is extruded such that elongate edge bead 31, 32 portions of the hinge are formed in retaining slots 25 defined in the brace sections. The edge bead portions of the hinge are retained in the retainer slots because of the narrow mouth of the slots. See column 4, lines 39-57.

Thus, the brace and the hinge member of Francis is not a *coextruded member* as presently claimed. Moreover, Francis fails to teach elements of a tongue and groove arrangement which are *bonded together* as the presently claimed.

Since Francis fails to teach each and every element of the claims, withdrawal of the rejections using Francis is respectfully urged.

Claims 1-8 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 (a) as being unpatentable over Wiese '955 (Wiese) in view of Green '392 (Green). This rejection is traversed as follows.

The Examiner alleges that Wiese in view of Green teaches a hinge comprising a hinge member constructed of thermoplastic rubber material, and mounting members constructed of a synthetic polymeric material, preferably an acrylic.

It is noted that Wiese teaches that the hinge member and the mounting members are separately extruded and then secured together by interengaging the tongue-and-groove elements of the hinge and mounting members. Green does not teach or suggest that the hinge and mounting members of Wiese can be coextruded or that the Wiese tongue-and-groove elements can be bonded together as presently claimed.

Consequently, the hinge arrived at by combining Wiese and Green does not arrive at the presently claimed invention. Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection using same is respectfully urged.

It is respectfully submitted that all outstanding issues have been addressed herein and that claims 5-9 and 12-15 are in condition for allowance, early notification of which is earnestly solicited. Should there be any questions or other matters whose resolution may be advanced by a telephone call, the Examiner is cordially invited to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney at his number listed below.

No fee is believed due as a result of this communication. The Commissioner, however, is hereby authorized to charge any other fees which may be required or credit any overpayment to

Deposit Account No. 02-4553.

Respectfully submitted,



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